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PRAYER.

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IN this age of intense activity, — accumulating riches with feverish anxiety, extending the boundaries of science in all directions with astonishing rapidity, and dispensing charities with a profusion akin to the Divine beneficence, — there is danger of disregarding and forgetting our connection with the unseen and eternal. Man is not only an efficient actor: he is an abundant receiver. Influences flow into him as well as out of him. Heavenly dews descend upon the soul as well as upon the soil. Man aspires as well as plans. He is conscious of the spiritual as well as of the material. He is conscious of his dependence as well as of his strength. He lifts his soul in prayer as well as his hand in labor. He feels his kinship with the skies. "Alone, of all earthly beings," says an eminent statesman, "man prays. Among his moral instincts, there is none more natural, more universal, more invincible, than prayer. The child cherishes it with a warm earnestness. The old flee to it as to a refuge against decay and loneliness. Prayer rises spontaneously upon young lips which can hardly lisp the name of God, and upon dying lips too feeble to pronounce it. Among all peoples, celebrated or obscure, civilized or barbarous, one encounters at every

step acts and forms of invocation. Everywhere where man lives, in certain circumstances, at certain hours, under the control of certain impulses of the soul, the eyes are raised, hands are joined, knees are bent, to implore or give thanks, to adore or deprecate. With transport or with trembling, publicly or in the privacy of his heart, man betakes himself to prayer in the last resort, to fill the emptiness of his soul, or to relieve the burdens of his lot: it is in prayer that he seeks, when every thing else fails him, support in his feebleness, consolation in his griefs, and hope for his virtue." The soul as naturally pours itself in prayer as the mountain bird warbles, or the mountain spring overflows. The religious experience of all ages and nations is indeed redolent with devotion and prayer. Jesus not only consecrated the mountain and the desert by his prayers, but he prayed with his disciples. Paul and Silas made the prison a temple by their prayers. Prayer was made without ceasing by the saints. At the grave; by the bed of the dying; in the chamber of sickness; in the hour of separation when friends were parted; in the day of return which welcomed them home; in festive hours, when the heart was joyous, and the day bright; in sorrow, when the spirit fainted and the heart was riven; in every condition of retirement and society, of hope and fruition, of prosperity's blessing or adversity's blight; everywhere where there was a blessing to seek or be grateful for, a want felt and to be supplied, — there was the place, then was the hour, for prayer.

I know, that some persons, especially the young, think there is a shadow, a sadness, covering the hour of prayer. As well might one speak of sadness when the child pours its griefs into its mother's bosom, and finds relief; or floods her ears with tones of joy, and deepens and lengthens its bliss thereby. I know that when sin has mottled

the soul's whiteness, and conscience accuses us of wrong, the petition for forgiveness falters on our lips, and we look up timidly, speak tremblingly, still in hope, still in faith; but the nearer we approach the mercy-seat, the greater our assurance, the warmer our fervor, till the hesitating petition for pardon is changed into ardent gratitude for acceptance. As the erring child hesitates and halts as it approaches its father whom it has wronged, and shrinks and trembles as it implores forgiveness, looking timidly up into his face, rendered indistinct by its tears, to read the expression of acceptance or rejection, yet at last rushes confidingly and joyfully into his extended arms, and, thrilled with delight, reposes on his bosom as it sees the benignant smile and hears the encouraging word; so the sinning soul may feel sad, and tremble and hesitate, when at a distance he resolves to seek his Father's house and blessing, and sees the green, fresh fields, and the paternal mansion, and the open door, and the Infinite Father from afar: but, when he approaches, his fears diminish as the distance diminishes, till his sobs of penitence are changed into outpourings of trust and of gratitude. No: the hour of prayer is not an hour of sadness; the place of prayer is not a place of darkness: it is an hour of deep and holy peace and joy; it is a place of transfiguration bathed in light from Heaven. Calmness, serenity, usually fill the soul. Sometimes, however, the billows of sorrow may so break over us that sharp agony may pain us; but angels will visit us, as they did Jesus, and still the storm, and give us peace. Or, on the other hand, our joy may be so deep, so thrilling, that ecstasy may fill the hour and heart; but, after we have poured our gushing gratitude into the inclining ear of the Father, a serene, a tranquil joy succeeds our exultation. This is one of the eminent blessings of prayer: it gives serenity, calmness, peace, trust,

after the anxieties of expectancy, the exultations of success, the agonies of sorrow and bereavement. And such hours are the most precious. The deepest and most desirable and most permanent joy is not where the laughter and song are loudest. These are superficial and temporary. These are ripples, eddies, on the surface of joy, showing its shallowness, not its depths. We are always pensive and thoughtful when we are most happy. As the tidal wave climbs up the shore, hour by hour, when not a ripple ruffles the surface of the water till it fills and floods every waiting pool and winding inlet; so the serene joys of devotion, though no music murmurs on the lips, no laughter sparkles in the eye, bathe and refresh the thirsty recesses of the aspiring soul.

I say, then, that the hour of prayer is a pleasant hour: it is as the small rain upon the tender herb, as the gentle dew upon the thirsty plant.

But *why? wherefore? What is* prayer, that it will make us thus tranquil and joyous, thus calm and trustful? What is prayer, that it purifies and exalts us, helps us to live worthily and hopefully? What is it, that the young should kneel in their buoyancy and brightness; that the joyful should gather at its shrine, and offer thanksgiving; that the sad should look upward, and dry their tears; that morning should be welcomed by its voice, and evening made fragrant by its incense?

To pray is to ask for what we need, to return thanks for what we receive, to implore forgiveness for our sins. It is to seek guidance in difficulty, strength in weakness, wisdom in ignorance, aid in duty. It is to invoke a blessing upon past endeavors, and help in future undertakings: it is to commit ourselves, and all whom we love, trustfully to our heavenly Father's care. Prayer is not a cold, formal repetition of words, at set times, in set tones, in

consecrated places. It is the gushing-up of the soul's desires, the overflowing of the soul's gratitude, the struggling confession of its short-comings, the expression of its resolves, its consecrations. It is an irrepressible sense of want seeking supplies from the Infinite Fulness. It is aspiration climbing along the craggy pathways to the Fountain of all joys and fruitions.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
Unuttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
That trembles in the breast.

Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
The falling of a tear,
The upward glancing of an eye,
When none but God is near."

Emotions may take the place of speech, and aspiration of petition.

When prayer is offered unitedly in the congregation, the penitence, the gratitude, the petition, are embodied in words by him who leads the devotions, so that all hearts can join in one request, utter one thanksgiving; and thus all things be done decently and in order. But, when one prayeth alone, all form is disregarded, and man speaketh freely to his heavenly Father. No other voice is to join with his, no other hearts are to be lifted heavenward by his devotions. His words, if words he uses, are his own. All restraint is removed. The filial spirit overflows and enjoys. In a word, which comprehends all and expresses all, prayer is a child's intercourse with its parent, — so free, so confiding, so joyous, so natural.

I need not pause here, and ask if this is not an elevating, refining, gratifying service, — a holy privilege as well as a sacred duty. Is it strange that men should pray? Is it wonderful even that prayer should sometimes become

a superstition, and its form a charm? So natural, so spontaneous is it, that the wonder the rather is that men do not pray always and everywhere. It is wonderful, passing strange, that one can doubt and hesitate, and refuse to pray; that he can do such violence to his nature as to suppress its aspirations heavenward, and restrain the word of devotion which rushes to his lips. This is wonderful: this is strange.

This fact teaches us *why* we should pray. It is because we *cannot help it*, unless we do, or have already done, a grievous wrong to our natures. These upward yearnings must be gratified, these aspirations heavenward must ascend, the necessity of aid must be relieved, or the soul, through all its vital tissues, will feel the wrong. How low must one have sunk who never feels them! How the turbid currents of worldliness and appetite must have torn in their fury, and clogged in their foulness, all the tissues of that spirit which neither feels gratitude for success, nor a disposition to express it if felt; who neither recognizes, nor if recognized will acknowledge, the presence and providence of God in his blessings or his sorrows; who lives an orphan under the very shadow of his Father's protecting hand! God in mercy quicken such hearts, unseal such eyes, that they may behold his presence and feel his care!

I go further than this. I not only affirm that prayer is a *natural* act of man, and that to restrain prayer would be doing violence to his highest nature: I say also, that this spirit of devotion MUST BE NURTURED to be healthy, to be preserved even. As to all other emotions and affections, so to this neglect brings disease, feebleness, extinction. Exercise, indulgence, is the life of the emotions. We must aspire, or we shall grovel. We must pray filially, or we shall pray profanely. We must adore, or

we shall blaspheme. We must soar where the seraphs sing, or we shall sink where the serpents hiss. If a devout, a grateful spirit is natural and holy, then it becomes a duty, a necessity, to watch its inspirations, to diligently cherish every devotional impulse, and pour our souls in prayer when the spirit breathes upon us.

More than this: We should pray because *devotion is the mother of other virtues*, consecrates all virtues. It makes fragrant other services of heart and hand, as the cedar-tree perfumes all the grove. It clarifies the intellect and warms the heart; it invigorates resolution and insures performance; it repels temptation and inspires goodness. Let experience speak.

Here is a man about to enter upon the duties of the day. He has laid his plans, and is about to execute them. He is to-day going to take advantage of the weakness and ignorance of his neighbor, and wrong him of both estate and reputation, not in violation of law, but according to law, — according to its letter, not according to its spirit. The hour of prayer comes. He prays: he asks a blessing on the day's duties and labors; he hesitates; he pauses. "Pray for hardness and deceit? pray for aid from the Father to wrong his child?" Never, never! The scheme is abandoned, the stain on the soul's whiteness bleached by repentance. The transaction, when seen in the light of the Father's countenance, is transformed from attractiveness to repulsiveness, from lawful barter to a brother's robbery.

Again: Here is one who has been wronged, — deeply, sorely wronged, — and he not only has not forgiven the wrong, he is seeking revenge, not recompense; he is plotting how he may take it. He discovers a way; and he exults, that, before the next day's sun goes down, he shall taste the sweets of retaliation, give in full measure in-

jury for injury. Before he closes his eyes in sleep, he prays for protection, for forgiveness. The words of that simple yet comprehensive prayer of our Saviour are on his lips: "Forgive me my trespasses as I forgive those who trespass against me."—"What! is this the ground of pardon? How can I thus pray? Is it not solemn mockery to pray for forgiveness if I do not forgive? to seek for mercy when I show no mercy?" The burning passion cools; the cherished revenge is cast out; the victim of his hatred becomes the object of his pity and forgiveness; and so prayer repels the tempter, rescues from wrong-doing.

He who daily prays must live virtuously. I do not say, he who daily utters the words and takes the posture of prayer, but he who *prays*. No man, living in daily violation of what he believes to be the will of his heavenly Father, can ask that Father's aid. Will the evil-doer invoke the presence and the benediction of God on his evil deeds? Never, till his nature is inverted, and all his moral instincts are dead. Prayer, then, is our refuge in temptation: we are rescued from evil-doing thereby.

More than this: Prayer is more than a strong-hold in which we are secure.

> "The closet which the saint devotes to prayer
> Is not his tower only, but his temple,
> Whither he goes for blessing and renewal."

We should pray because the soul is invigorated by it. Our good resolutions are strengthened, our prostrate faith is lifted up. The labor which seemed so difficult that we shrank from it is now undertaken with ardor; for the Omnipotent One is our helper. Our loneliness is relieved by the Father's presence. We become pure by a consciousness of the presence of Infinite Purity: all low, unworthy, selfish purposes and desires are put far away from us, and loftier, nobler, fraternal desires and purposes take their

place. And often, in the hour of devotion, we find strength to rise above the passions and appetites which before and elsewhere had ruled us with such despotic power. The more pervasive our devotion, the more entire our self-control, the more complete our self-mastership. These are the results of prayer flowing from our nature, originating in it.

But God is not inactive. He helps us. We are not only cheered by the consciousness of his approbation, but we are lifted by his hand, taught by his inspiration, sanctified by his spirit. God gives while we seek. Is not our heavenly Father more willing to give good gifts to those who ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children? Do you ask how he *can?* Has he not the power, who guideth Arcturus and his sons, and looseth the bands of Orion? Has he not the blessing, whose is the earth, and the fulness thereof, and the glory of the firmanent? "*Will* he hear us?" Has he not said it in his word? has he not written it on the living tablet of our hearts? has he not promised it by implanting this ineradicable instinct in our souls, in all souls? Has the infinite Father mocked the hopes, the trust, of his child? Never, oh, never! God answers our prayers. We may be assured of receiving what we ask for in filial trust; or what is better than that for which we ask, when we ask amiss. Prayer is not, as the philosophers tell us, simply self-excitation, chafing the skin, irritating the throat, fretting the emotions, the blessedness of making moral muscle by struggling at our shoe-latchets to lift ourselves to heaven. Oh, no, no! it is no such folly as that. It is asking favor of God; and he gives it. The blessing of prayer is not simply improving our vocabulary of devotion, and hallowing our emotions by a thoughtfulness of God's presence. The blessing of prayer is more

than this, much more than this. It is a gift bestowed because it was sought, and so in our weakness we are made strong. God breathes upon the upward-looking spirit, and we are refreshed. As a child does not ask its father for a favor simply from the pleasure of being in its father's presence, and addressing him; so God's child does not pray simply for the joy which the privilege gives, but for the blessing which the Father has promised to bestow upon those who ask him.*

When should we pray, then, if such is the blessedness, such the spirit, of prayer? We should pray when we feel our need; when the trials of life press upon us, and we want help; when the blessings of life are heaped upon us, and gratitude rises to our lips. When adversity overtakes us, let us pray for courage; when prosperity showers abundance, let us offer thanksgiving; when morning dawns, let us implore aid in our duties; when evening darkens, let us seek forgiveness for the wrong, acceptance of the right, and protection in our sleep. In the retirement of solitude, let us pray: there, the flame of devotion burns most steadily, most purely, and ascends to heaven most swiftly. But we may pray elsewhere. In the midst of toil, we may send up a devout aspiration, offer a hearty thanksgiving. But he who prays nowhere else save in the crowd, under the burden of toil, amidst the tumult of the multitude, will find his offering poor and his incense earthly. Solitude must often be sought, that fresh fire

* I cannot persuade myself that it is necessary to say a word respecting the object of prayer, to whom our prayers should be addressed Our blessed Lord has taught all who are willing to be taught, "Pray to thy Father."—"After this manner pray ye, Our Father."—"In that day ye shall ask me nothing: verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."—"For this cause," says Paul, "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Let this suffice.

from heaven may descend, and kindle the sacrifice. But we need not always pray there. Surrounded by the clamor of the world, the din of business, the shouts of the rushing throng, our aspirations may sometimes go up gratefully to heaven, as did the cloud of incense from the golden altar in the temple on Moriah, though hostile hosts surrounded it, and the shout of battle rolled and reverberated through its pillared courts. In the midst of the collisions and strifes of the market and the court, the rumbling of wheels and the din of machinery, the expectant ear may hear the answering words of peace and deliverance, as the longing, watching maiden, at the desperate siege of Lucknow, amid the thunder of artillery, the groans of the wounded, and the cries of the starving, caught the distant pibroch note, prophecy and promise of rescue and salvation. Pray, then, everywhere. Pray when peril confronts us, and we faint. Pray when sickness weakens us, and we despair. Pray at the marriage where young hearts are pledged for ever.

> "Kneel down by the side of the tearful fair,
> And strengthen the perilous hour with prayer."

Pray when the young mother imprints the holy kiss on the brow of her first-born; —

> "Hour of bliss when the heart o'erflows
> With rapture a mother only knows."

Pray when the generous son, brother, father, husband, go forth from the sanctuary of home, to seek their fortune, or discharge their duty, in distant fields, on distant seas; —

> "For the perils of sea and perils of field
> Sad harvests of sorrow and sadness may yield."

Pray when the soul is unfolding its wings for paradise, —

> "And commend the spirit to God who gave;
> Lifting the thoughts from the cold, dark grave."

Pray in the assembly of the people, when families go up to the sanctuary in company; —

> "For the hallowed hour that God has blest
> Invites to prayer with its welcome rest."

Pray everywhere, with all prayer and supplication. Let all pray that sorrow may be turned into joy, and joy be hallowed by gratitude. Let all pray that youth may be fragrant with excellence, and age mature with virtue, that both blossom and fruit may be acceptable to God our Father.

> "Child, amidst the flowers at play,
> While the red light fades away;
> Mother, with thine earnest eye,
> Ever following silently;
> Father, by the breeze of eve
> Called the harvest work to leave;
> Pray! ere yet the dark hours be,
> Lift the eye and bend the knee."

Oh! what hour is there of life's duties or life's joys, life's sorrows or life's successes, which does not invite to prayer? It purifies the temple of the heart, which becomes thereby a sanctuary for the abode of the Father. Here, it is true, as we pilgrims journey to our rest, tears of penitence mingle with our offerings of gratitude; as we climb the heights of deliverance, sighs are wafted upward with our thanksgivings: —

> "But the ransomed shout to their glorious King,
> Where no sorrow shades the soul as they sing;
> A sinless and joyous song they raise,
> And their voice of prayer is eternal praise."

Oh, let us, by devout prayerfulness, and heavenly aspiration, and perpetual thanksgiving, be ready to join them in their lofty anthem, to mingle our incense of gratitude with their chorus of praise!

HUMAN NATURE NOT RUINED, BUT INCOMPLETE.

BY REV. C. C. EVERETT.

Two theories of Human Nature are often expressed, neither of which is wholly true, and neither of which is fully believed, even by those who have adopted it as their own. One of these theories is that human nature is wholly evil; the other is that human nature is wholly good and perfect. One explains all the evil in the world by the utterly depraved natures of the individuals who make up society; the other explains the sins of the individual by the evil which he finds embodied in the outer world. To the one, each separate life is a turbid stream, polluting the fair earth; to the other, each new life is a fountain sweet and pure, whose waters will soon become polluted by the mire through which they flow. Neither of these theories is fully believed. Those who insist most strongly on the total depravity of human nature, we find recognizing, in actual life, the native virtues of the soul; while those who insist on the perfect purity of the individual nature at its birth, recognize differences in character, and original predispositions to certain faults or vices. Neither of these theories can be wholly true. If man is wholly evil, whence the good that is in the world? If man is wholly good, whence the evil? The doctrine of the total depravity of man, indeed, confutes itself. If it is my nature to do what we call evil, then it ceases to be evil. The lines of Dr. Watts suggest a truth that may be applied to every sphere of life. We say, —

"Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For God hath made them so;
Let bears and lions growl and fight,
For 'tis their nature too."

We call a man sinful in proportion as he lives like the beasts; but if that is his nature, if God has made him so, it ceases to be sin. It is a well-known fact, that a large part of this continent, as well as of Europe, was once covered with glaciers. Scientific men formerly attempted to explain this accumulation of glacial ice, by showing how a period of intense cold might have been brought upon the earth. The colder the earth of the past, the better, they thought, they understood this glacial action. It is now known, that, in such intense cold, no glacier could have been formed. Heat is needed to cause such an accumulation of vapor from the ocean, that, when it congealed, it should settle down in these almost inconceivable masses. A wholly evil nature cannot sin, more than a wholly cold world can produce glaciers. There is needed within the nature a principle or a possibility of goodness to make sin possible.

If we leave our theories, and look at the world as it is, we find good and evil side by side; we find even the germs of good and evil side by side, in every individual nature. Our problem is to understand the relation in which these two elements stand to one another.

When we look more closely, we find that all virtues stand in a certain connection with one another. Together, they form a perfect whole. Each is needed by all the rest for their completeness; and each needs all the rest, or it is imperfect. We can conceive of an ideal man in which all virtues exist, each in its true proportion, and together form a beautiful and complete unity. This possible perfection and harmonious co-existence we see to be the plan after which human nature is shaped. This completed plan is what we strive to realize in our dreams, our romances, our loves and aspirations. We cannot conceive, as was just stated, of a being wholly evil. We can conceive, and can-

not help conceiving, of a being wholly good. There is thus the trace of plan and system in the goodness, while the evil is only the imperfection and interruption of this ideal plan.

The question now meets us, Is this perfect nature, of which we can trace the imperfect and scattered elements, ruined or incomplete? When we see these scattered human virtues, of which no life is wholly destitute, and which, in spite of sin and wrong, ennoble the world, are we looking upon the ruins, the broken arches, the crumbling pillars, of a past perfection; or are we looking at the broad foundation and uprising columns of a perfection that is yet to be? According as we take one or the other of these views is our thought of humanity sad or hopeful. To many, the grandest exhibition of human virtue can be only sorrowful. It can remind them only of the greatness of their loss. If a fragment is so fair, what must have been the original magnificence? Not merely do they wander among ruins; these ruins are blasted by a curse. It was the bolt of the wrath of God that scattered the fair structure; and whatever remains, however beautiful at first sight, is yet scarred by the mark of his anger. To others, the virtues of human life have a grace and a joy that are not in themselves. They are not merely lovely: they are the prophecies of the grander loveliness that is to come. The world is to them no ruin blasted and accursed. They see the city of God slowly forming itself out of the chaos; and they see, above all, the smile of God's blessing.

We can determine which of these theories is true, only by considering the arguments upon which they rest. The belief that human nature is a ruin, blasted by the curse of God, rests upon the story of the fall of man, as it is related in the book of Genesis, and supported by the traditions of other nations, that speak of a golden age in the

distant past. What is the element of human nature, from which springs the tendency to this backward-looking glance, by which individuals, as well as races, turn so often with sad longing to their early years, we need not here inquire; neither is there a necessity for examining the authority of the passage in Genesis to which reference has been made. The incident of the speaking serpent, and of the formation of woman from a rib taken out of the side of Adam, would seem to remove this narration from the sphere of literal history. The name of the "tree of the knowledge of good and evil" — a tree which grows only in the gardens of the soul — would seem to imply that the story was not originally intended to be received as historic fact; while the yielding of Adam and Eve to the very first temptation would show that they could not have been originally very different from the weakest of their descendants. The Greek legend of Pandora is commonly related, as if Pandora brought, in a chest, to man, all the evils of life. The genuine legend was different. Man, it relates, had all the evils of life locked up in a box, from which they could not escape. Pandora persuaded him to lift the lid, and they came forth, and filled the earth with grief and terror. Such is the true conception of the fall of man, in contrast with the one commonly held. The heart of man was the sealed chest, which contained all sins and woes. Temptation could not bring them. It could only persuade man to lift the fatal lid. The story of the fall has a sublime truth and significance; but its truth does not lie on the plane of history, and its significance does not concern the hard facts which mark the beginning of the development of the human race.

For the belief that human nature is not ruined, but incomplete, we have the unvaried testimony of history, so far as history has traced the course of human development.

History is, indeed, and always will be, imperfect. It has not reached, and probably never will reach, the beginning of the life of man upon the earth. But, so far as it has penetrated backward, it has found itself tending towards the savage or barbarous state; and the earliest traces of human presence are the traces of savage or barbarous life. Even the book of Genesis, which describes the fair beginning of human history, shows traces of a preceding polytheism. Its very words, the words put into the mouth of the Creator himself, are half-converted heathen. The conception is monotheistic; but the language, "Let us make man in our image," is polytheistic. This is not the place for historic detail or discussion. I know the mystery which broods over the first life of man upon the earth. What agencies of creation or of elevation were at work, it is not for us, at present, to say. It is only a flippant conceit that can give unhesitating judgment. We can only say, that, so far as known facts can be laid hold of, the history of the human race has been a progressive one. We can take this for a certainty; while the assumption of a fall, from the effects of which this progress is a slow emerging, is purely hypothetical, and may be left out of the account, until we have some historical ground to sustain it.

If it be true, as history represents, that the race of man is progressing from a state of savage and barbarous life to a life of love and knowledge, to the refinements of civilization, and to the inspiration of Christianity, we have a satisfactory solution of the great problem of the mingled good and evil in life. We should be prepared to find all the wrong and the violence that we do find. From half-civilized savages what more could we expect? The law of hereditary descent, which is elsewhere so powerful, cannot be disregarded here. We find even in our household pets traces of the wild life of their remote ancestors; and we

must believe that only very slowly would the tendencies inwrought by ages of barbarous life be eliminated from the very structure of the race. Then, too, our habits of thought, our prejudices, our habits of feeling, our forms of government, our literature, our theologies, are all of the past. Each generation has its successor in its training, and it has been so from the beginning. Very slowly, then, can humanity have moved along its way. Moreover, as this elevation of the race, and of the individuals that compose it, depends upon a moral purpose; whenever this purpose is temporarily missing, there will be a lapse, a sliding-back, so that the ground won will have to be won over again. This is the disturbing effect of sin in human history, — of sin which is the close-following shadow of freedom.

It will be seen that this is no rose-colored view of human nature. It recognizes all its faults, its vices, its sins. It recognizes the hard selfishness which forms so great an element even in our most advanced society. But it recognizes also the virtues of humanity. It has a place for all the flashes of nobility and of self-sacrificing heroism, which have glorified, at however rare intervals, the history of every race. It has a place for those individuals who seem to us perfect, who are themselves the prophecies and the exemplars of the coming completeness of that common nature of which they are partakers. It has a place for the scattered and often hidden beginnings and hints of a better nature, which we find even in the most depraved. Still more, it recognizes the royal claims and bearing of virtue, wherever it appears, and the homage which the lowest and the vilest pay to it. Virtue does not appear upon the earth as vanquished or dethroned. Its dignity is not traditional, due by courtesy to its past supremacy. Virtue, wherever it appears, feels itself young and strong, the heir

of the world; and men recognize, by a certain instinctive prescience, the reality of its coming power.

We need hardly ask, whether the belief that human nature is a melancholy ruin of the past, or that it is indeed as yet incomplete, but sublime already with the grandeur of its coming perfection, falls in best with the tendencies and instincts of the present. The theory that human nature is a ruin might have been believed, indeed, among the corruptions that marked the period when the Roman Empire was tottering to its fall, and men fancied that the world itself was hastening to its end. It might be believed, perhaps, even now, in the old world, where tradition still controls the lives, if not the hearts, of men. It might be believed at other periods in the history of the world; but in this nineteenth century, in the midst of the untrammelled thought and the fresh springing life of this new world, such a doctrine can have neither place nor power. It lies athwart the course of all the ideas and principles which mark the present. Faith in man is the form, which, in the present age, faith in God pre-eminently takes. Men once fancied that they honored God by degrading, in their thought, the nature of man. Now men can find no better way of honoring God than by recognizing the traces of the reflection of his perfections, however faint and scattered, in the human soul. All the great movements of the present rest on this faith in human nature. The world is slowly becoming democratic. In remote nations and in divers ways, we find, the principle of democracy is becoming more and more the ruling power. In this nation, it is fully recognized in theory, however imperfectly in fact, as the one central and fundamental principle; and democracy can have no other basis than faith in human nature. Even the church in America, which involves the most delicate and the loftiest relations of the soul, rests upon a popular

basis. No matter what the professed belief of any church may be; when it throws itself, fully and unreservedly, upon the people for its support, it shows that it has faith in the people, in those religious instincts which are its only firm foundation, in that love of the highest which seeks to embody itself in outward form and service.

This faith in human nature is not merely faith in what it is, but still more faith in what it is to be. The only basis of reform must be the belief, that what can now get a footing, however slight, will hereafter stand on a foundation which cannot be shaken. You leave your boat on the sloping beach, just where the ripples of the ebbing tide can lap, though they cannot float it. Do you not fear that it will be swept away? You know that the waves, which now just float about it, in a few moments will not reach it; that they will sink away, and leave it every moment further inland. Such confidence do we have in whatever embodies the purest principles of right. If it can obtain a foothold, we are secure. The wrong and prejudice that threaten it, that almost sweep it from its foundation, we know will recede in an ebb that will be succeeded by no flood-tide, and leave it, not merely unmoved, but unthreatened.

The belief, that human nature is not ruined, although as yet incomplete, involves the fairest promise of the future. When we look backward only, we might feel proud of our attainments: when we look forward, we are humbled. The mountain-side is not half scaled. When we look down, we grow giddy with the height that we have reached; but when we look up, and see the summit as far removed in appearance as if we had not begun to climb, our dizzy pride leaves us. The philanthropy, the science, the civilization, of the future will excel ours, as ours does the past. Compare Christianity with Christ, and you will see the difference between the Christianity of the present and that of the future.

The truth we are considering applies to the individual as well as to the race. The most sunken soul is not a hopeless ruin; the loftiest is not yet complete. Channing seems to us a perfect man. Yet Channing drew his strongest faith in immortality from the prophecy of completeness, contained in the unfinished plan even of his own being.

Who does not feel within himself like hints of what he might be, but is not? What character can we become familiar with, which does not give us hints of what it was meant to be, but is not yet? Even from what we see, we can guess at the ideal which that particular character is meant to reach. Or, when we cannot find this in ourselves and others, we find it in our thought of Jesus. It does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that we shall be like him. Let us, then, strive after the highest and the best. Let us take nothing less than Christ himself for our pattern; knowing, that, though our natures are imperfect, they are not deserted by the loving inspiration of God, and that we are meant to grow up, in all things, unto Him who is our Head.

BAPTISM.

BY REV. L. J. LIVERMORE.

The purpose of this article is to state, in a very summary form, what we suppose to be the prevailing views among us on the subject of Baptism; touching only on the leading points of evidence sufficiently to make clear the nature of our faith.

The practice of baptism, as a symbol of moral purpose and religious conviction, is supposed to have originated from the use of water in bathing, and as a means of cere-

monial cleanness. It is believed to have been customary to baptize converts to Judaism, as one step in their initiation into the privileges of the Jewish Church. That it was a rite already in use among the Jews, and with a somewhat definite religious signification, appears from the way in which John is said to have come baptizing, without any thing to intimate or suggest that it was a novelty originated by him. The same is also indicated by Christ's words to Nicodemus, in John, third chapter, fifth verse; for, if Nicodemus had not already been used to this form, such an answer would not have been intelligible to him. Christ alludes to the rite as something his hearer would understand. Baptism was a symbol peculiarly intelligible and expressive to the people of a warm climate, where water was comparatively scarce, and its use indispensable almost equally for health and comfort.

When John came preaching in the remoter country regions of Judea, — conscious of a religious inspiration and mission, and looking for the speedy appearing of the Redeemer, — he found this symbol of moral and religious renewal already familiar to the people. It was well adapted to give point and permanence to the religious feelings he awakened. It defined the nature and purpose of his call to them, in a clearer and more effective way than verbal statements alone could do it. John's baptism is sometimes spoken of as the baptism of or to repentance; but this does not carry the inference that the symbolic meaning of the rite, as he used it, was penitence. The symbol had reference to the purer life which was to follow. It was not a confession of past sins, but a pledge of future piety and righteousness. Only as such could Jesus have received the rite. It was in him the formal recognition of John's right to preach of the truth which he proclaimed, and a type of his own consecration to a holy life. For others,

it was a baptism of repentance, because the sinful can only come to righteousness through repentance. Reformation is to them the condition of subsequent holiness of life. John's baptism was also called the baptism of repentance, because he enjoined this as the means of grace; while Christian baptism was associated with higher views of the divine presence and help.

The same reasons which made this rite suitable for John's purposes commended it to Jesus. Almost as soon as he began to have disciples, the disciples began to baptize. There is no reason to doubt this baptism was in the name of Jesus; that is, it implied a receiving of him so far as his work was then manifest. When the Lord's earthly task was completed, he left this to his disciples as the plainest outward sign of faith in him. Its meaning to the Christian convert lay not in any implied confession of past sins, or any supposed power in the rite to make him clean. It was his formal reception of a new teacher, and a new life, — a life of moral purity and of religious consecration. By receiving baptism in the name of Jesus, he signified that the purer life to which he pledged himself was made to appear to him his duty through the teachings of Christ; that he believed in Jesus as one sent from God, as his Lord and Master; and, because believing so, that he took on himself the duty of living according to the commands of Jesus. The ordinance carried with itself a meaning varying according to each convert's measure of Christian faith and understanding. It stood for his pledge of faith and duty, and was equally the symbol of his participation in the grace and privileges of the gospel.

Baptism came to be an ordinance of the Christian Church, not because of any essential value in itself, — not because Jesus Christ saw in it, of itself, any spiritual value, — but as a form or symbol, the meaning of which was already

familiar to those around him, and therefore well adapted to serve as an expressive, intelligible, and visible sign and confession of faith in him as the Teacher and Redeemer of men. There is no proof that Jesus regarded the rite as an indispensable condition of salvation, or of a Christian faith and standing. The words already referred to, spoken to Nicodemus, are most reasonably explained, not as enforcing a double necessity of baptism and of spiritual regeneration, but one necessity, — the moral and religious birth, of which the washing of water was the recognized symbol and the spirit of God the efficient cause, in opposition to the Jewish trust in natural descent from Abraham. Any thing so contrary to the general tenor of Christ's teaching as the absolute necessity of an outward and ritual observance can be received only on the authority of an express declaration. There is no such express declaration of the indispensableness of baptism. If Paul had regarded this rite as the invariable and necessary condition of a Christian position and salvation, expressly enjoined and instituted by the Lord, he could not have said, "Christ sent me not to baptize." His way of speaking of it shows that he looked on it as a thing of subordinate importance, — as a sign, which, being in use and well understood, and approved by the Lord, should be observed, but to be carefully restrained to its proper use as a symbol only; that he avoided any views that seemed to attribute to it any efficacy other than as a sign and pledge of a new and better life after it.

With regard to the method of baptism, there is nothing to prove that the form was considered material, — nothing to make it certain that any one form was exclusively used. It is not improbable that it was often by immersion. Habits and conditions peculiar to that age and climate made this a far less inconvenient and otherwise objectionable

form than in our time and situation. Several recorded instances of baptism are such as most naturally to be understood of some other method than immersion, — as that of Paul, just rising from a long season of prostration and fasting; that of the jailer's family; and perhaps that of the great multitude added to the Church at Pentecost. But, whatever the practice was at that time, it is contrary to the essential nature of the gospel to suppose any religious importance to be in a precise imitation. No Church in the world, it is probable, observes the Lord's Supper in precisely the same way that it was first observed. Yet Christians do not any the less believe that they are obeying the precept of the Master. The idea is the essential thing. "The flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you are spirit and are life." So baptism, being a symbol, may, with obvious propriety, vary to suit the physical circumstances of person and place. In some cases, it is obviously impracticable to administer the rite by immersion. It cannot be thought that Christ meant to make spiritual ends depend on uncertain material conditions. We believe it is actually following Christ, to assert our freedom from an unvarying rule of form, while we aim to preserve the moral and spiritual significance.

With regard to the baptism of children in infancy, we hold that the New Testament does not give any explicit information. The words in Acts viii. 16, taken in connection with what immediately precedes, and interpreted in the light of what is well known to have been the custom of the Jews, create a strong presumption that children were baptized then and there by the apostle, or under his immediate direction. The words of ver. 16 are most obviously explained as a reason for the precept of the preceding verse, and as intended to meet a doubt, which some might feel, whether Christian baptism was meant for children as well

as adults. The several instances where households are said to have been baptized, as if following the lead and example of the head of the family, strengthen the presumption. Moreover, this has been the practice of the Church from the earliest times of which we have record. The first fathers allude to the custom, as that which was in general use, and derived from the traditions of the apostles. They discuss questions as to time and other conditions, but not as to the fitness of the custom itself. We favor this practice also on grounds of reason, which are good in the absence of express precept to the contrary, as significant of the divinely ordained connection between the life of the parent and that of the children; and symbolic of the general law, that children of faithful Christian parents grow up believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

We do not regard the baptism of the young as a completed thing, until, being brought up in the knowledge of God and the Saviour, and having attained to the power of acting and judging for themselves, they openly and freely adopt the act of their parents as their own. The significance of infant baptism depends much on our faith in the Church as the organic and perpetually renewed body of Christ, — one, though ever changing, — and resting on the divinely appointed continuity of human life. The children of Christian parents are born into the Church of Christ. They are the Lord's. Baptism does not make the bond. It declares it, and pledges the parent to fidelity in his efforts to make it a lasting and complete union by the Christian nurture and instruction of his offspring.

We regard baptism as only a symbol, in itself of no effect, as signing the pledge is in the case of one who abandons the use of alcohol. This symbol is of higher respect than any other, as having come to us through ages of Christian observance, as pertaining to the most moment-

ous interests and duties, and as sanctioned by the example and authority of the Head of the Church. It is not formality to adhere to it, there being no objection to it, when it is held free from superstitious notions, either as to its efficacy or its form; and, on the other hand, there being many good reasons for continuing it. Those rather are formalists, who, like the Quakers, make a *point*, and therefore a *form*, of rejecting all forms. It is the only visible mark of the unity of the Church, — one Lord, one baptism. It is a plain, easy, intelligible way of performing a universal duty, that of openly confessing faith in Christ; an equally intelligible sign of the pure and righteous life to which the Christian pledges himself. Coming to us from Christ, and administered in his name, it is a means of expressing, and therefore a means of strengthening, the sense of our union with him. It continues and visibly expresses the unity of the Church as the fellowship of believers in one Saviour, believers in God the Father through Christ the Son. We offer and urge it on the unbaptized, not as an avowal of holiness attained, or a saving change already wrought, but, after the apostles' custom, as a simple act of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as our Teacher and Redeemer; the law of our higher and better life, when life in its strength is ours; and the ground of a hope triumphant over sickness and the fear of death.

A RECORD OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

THIRD LETTER.

Mr. Editor, — In previous letters, I have traced my gradual emancipation from the bondage of rites and ceremonies, and the authority which these are supposed by many to possess. My remarks had reference to the Episcopal Church, more as an

ecclesiastical system than as the witness and keeper of doctrines, many of which she shares in common with all other so-called "orthodox" bodies.

Some persons might think that the adoption of such liberal views as I have declared, need not conflict with continued membership of a church which contains so great varieties of belief, and whose discipline, even in marked cases of heresy, is wisely, or *necessarily*, lax. They might instance the host of progressive English clergymen; the authors of "Essays and Reviews;" the critical expounders of the Bible, with Colenso at their head; or, in our own country, the generous affiliation with "the sects" which is practised by the large-hearted Bishop of Rhode Island, and the celebrated Rector of St. George's Church, New York; not to speak of many incumbents of more retired parishes, who lend a helping hand in all humanitarian work, without regard to the distinctions of creed and form amongst their fellow-laborers. But it must be remembered that most of those who are conspicuous in the Church for their liberality of opinion occupy positions of power, and are possessed of various advantages, by which they hope to benefit those under their charge; while, at the same time, these advantages constitute their protection against the opposition of the more bigoted party. Probably, also, Bishop Clark and Dr. Tyng, and their clerical brethren of like mind, could tell many a story of thwarting and rebuke which their catholicity of spirit has provoked; while it is well known that the complications arising from the union of church and state is what saves the brave Colenso and his inquiring friends from the wrath of our Anglican Mother.

Besides, in many instances where small regard is paid to the distinctive features of church government and liturgical observances, there is yet no symptom of a falling-off in doctrine. The great majority of Low-Churchmen, both clerical and lay, accept the propositions of the creed, yea, and of the thirty-nine articles also, without question; either because these doctrines are well suited to their quality of mind, or because they do not think deeply upon their meaning. In this connection, it might be a curious inquiry, productive of curious results, to ascertain how many of those who are great sticklers for the

claims of the Church have ever studied, or even read attentively, these same thirty-nine articles. I know scores of men and women, who may be, at this moment, lifting up their hands and eyes in holy horror at my defection from the true faith, who could not, for the life of them, tell what that faith is, as contained in their articles of religion, which are, nevertheless, bound up in every copy of the Prayer-book.

My first doubts, as to the truth of some doctrines which are considered "fundamental" by all orthodox bodies, arose more from the working of thought and experience upon the natural bias of my mind, than from any distinct outward influence. Of course, my general reading re-acted upon my habits of thought, and modified the lessons of experience; but, during all the hesitation and questioning which was a secret burden upon my heart for years, I read no controversial work on theology; least of all did I meddle with polemics "outside the pale."

But my comparative ignorance of more rational systems of belief was no reason why I should fail to examine and pass judgment upon the one which was in operation around me. This was indeed a dispensation of fear. From earliest youth, the terrors of the law had sounded in my ears from every side, till all the pleasures of life appeared forbidden joys, to be recompensed in full by future punishment; while death seemed a frightful evil, all the more because it was the introduction to an endless state which threatened far more misery than it promised good.

I was as miserable in my secret thoughts as my naturally cheerful disposition would allow me to be. I can never forget those mental conflicts; and one of my greatest regrets in looking back over my early life is, that the beautiful season of youth was so chilled and clouded by fears which I now believe were unnecessary and groundless.

If my distress had been caused by known transgression of law, by wilful neglect of duty, I could have been soothed by penitence, and have afterwards avoided both the fault and its consequent remorse; but there was no particular sin on my conscience, only a vague sense of undeserving, and a looking-for of wrath wholly disproportionate to my offences, and which

was the needless burden laid upon me by a long line of bilious enthusiasts, "whose digestion was their religion," at least the gloomy part of it.

Not for a moment did I feel safe. It seemed to me that all the forces of nature were in league to destroy one who continued unmoved through surrounding revivals, and annually recurring Lenten seasons, and all the other human means of grace. "Lightning and tempest" — "plague, pestilence, and famine" — "battle and murder and sudden death," — of each and all of these deprecated evils I was afraid, because I was out of the ark. I could not claim the promised defence from untoward influences of sun and moon. I was unprovided with the helmet and sword and shield which were the necessary armor for the battle against spiritual foes.

Wearied at last of this unprotected condition, I turned toward Mother Church for shelter. I applied for confirmation; thinking that not only should I be safer in life and in death through its membership, but also that my good impulses and worthy endeavors would thus receive encouragement. But it was judged by the authorities that I had not given sufficient evidence of my conversion; and so my proposition was quietly set aside, and I continued to be numbered with the "otherwise" virgins. That decision was just and right. I was not fit to take upon myself the duties and responsibilities which belong to church-membership as it exists amongst the orthodox at present; and it was a blessing to my own character that I was not allowed to quiet my fears in this illogical manner. After a time, I began to take a calmer view of life. My first gleam of comfort came through a superstitious act, which, unreasonable as it was, exerted a powerful influence upon my spirits, and gave me new courage and industry in useful pursuits. I was walking to church alone one morning, feeling unusually melancholy, and inclined to believe that my ill-spent life would soon close, and I be forced into another and a sadder world, when I casually opened my Prayer-book, and my eyes fell upon a verse of a Psalm: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." I started in surprise and joy, and believed the declaration in my own case as firmly as though an angel had

spoken the glad tidings from the sky. From that time, the morbid fear that had haunted me disappeared. I have lived since in the spirit of that worthy assertion, "Man is immortal till his work is done," and have found abundant reason to declare the works of the Lord in the bounties of his providence and the wonders of his grace.

As I grew older and more reflective, I perceived, that though most of the people by whom I was surrounded asserted emphatically, in prayer and conversation, their belief in the everlasting destruction of all unbelievers and impenitent persons; though ministers preached most harrowing sermons from that saddest text, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," and depicted the horrors of the fiery pit in such burning eloquence as (nearly) scorched the flesh, and singed the hair, of their hearers, — yet, when it came to a practical application of the doctrine, the belief in it seemed to fade away utterly, or else become considerably softened down and rounded off. Not only was the testimony of gravestones such that one might well ask where the wicked people were buried (I knew an instance of the death of a man who had never made any pretensions to religion, when his friends placed upon his monument the simple and touching inscription, "He loved his neighbor," in remembrance of his generous kindness to his fellows, and as an intimation to harsh judges, that, though to human appearance he might have failed in keeping the first and great commandment, he had given good heed to "the second, which is like unto it"); but even in cases of notorious carelessness and evil living, where death came without giving time for repentance, I never heard any outspoken assertion of the probable misery of such in their eternal state. The most that could be said was, "He is in God's hands, and God is merciful as well as just;" while, in milder instances of impenitence, every word and deed that gave evidence of a thoughtful and generous spirit was carefully treasured by the survivors, and strong hopes were built upon some slight incident which seemed to warrant the belief that "a spark of grace" had long been smouldering in that sin-darkened nature. Children, who had been as bad as

they could be, considering their age and circumstances; young people, passing away in the midst of their thoughtless, happy years; men, removed in their strength from places which they had filled with credit as good moral citizens; old persons, hardened in sin, who either "died and made no sign," or else attempted to atone for years of indifference and uselessness by a last sigh of penitence, and a prayer for mercy, — all these were laid in the grave, if not with hope, at least without despair.

All honor to the impulse of natural affection, which, in the plain, strong facts of daily life, can triumph over the bitter creeds which the lips repeat and the intellect often consents to!

Certainly, if men really believed this horrible doctrine, they would not rest so quietly, even in their own assured safety, while their friends and neighbors on every side are hurrying to destruction.

It was, then, the vast difference between theory and practice with regard to this doctrine, that first led me to doubt its truth; and, as thought deepened and knowledge accumulated in my own mind, this dreadful belief was driven further away, till I now refuse utterly to hold it. The wonderful care displayed by God in his works of creation, the infinite tenderness of Christ in his mission of love, and the susceptibility of all hearts, even the most degraded, to the influence of kindness, forbid the idea; at least, with our present means of observation and conclusion. That there is a tendency towards sin, a germ of evil in human nature, cannot be denied; but evil, in its development, is so modified by circumstances, that no finite mind can determine its proportion with regard to individuals. There must always be taken into account the degree of temptation; the quality of previous education and habits; the extent of privileges; and, behind all these and more powerful than all, a principle which has thus far been generally neglected, and consequently little understood, but which must become the basis of improvement, if the race is ever to realize the aspirations of its purest leaders. I mean a right understanding of the laws of hereditary transmission of qualities, and a due consideration of the importance of pre-natal influences.

The theory with regard to a future existence, which I hold

in common with many others, is this: that all human beings carry into the next world the dispositions which they possessed or cultivated here, but unencumbered henceforth with the weakness of the flesh; that, in this unknown state, there is progress from bad to good, from good to better, in all degrees to the best. Discipline and retribution, suffering, and even grievous punishment, there may be; but these must, somewhere in eternity, find a gradual transmutation into peace and joy.

And is there, in such a belief, any encouragement to choose evil and refuse good? Every mind which is in any degree normal in its workings, even after a human standard, can be more easily and largely influenced by the hope of reward, the desire to please a benefactor, than by the dread of coming into collision with an enraged superior power. To some the restraint of fear may be necessary, and for such the law is a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ; there must have been this need, or the doctrine of eternal punishment could not have gained such sway in the world; while the gradual diminution of its power is a cheering indication of right progress.

Already have "infants of a span long" ceased to pave the courts of hell in the imagination of gloomy fanatics; children who have not reached a responsible age on earth are freely admitted, by human decisions, into the green fields of the spiritual Canaan; by and by we shall all be welcomed there, —

"No wanderer lost,
A family in heaven."

E.

REPORT OF REV. JOHN CORDNER.

Rev. Charles Lowe. May, 1866.

My Dear Sir, — In reply to your inquiry concerning the Unitarian Church at New Orleans, I have to say, that, on my arrival in New Orleans at the close of January last, I found the worshipping society very much disorganized. There had been no regular ministerial services since the spring of 1861. After the departure of the last settled minister in that year, a

few of the more zealous members of the congregation kept up a Sunday morning-service by reading; and this was continued about four years. After a year's discontinuance of Unitarian services of any kind, a desire was felt for a renewal of regular services; and, by invitation of those most interested, I went to New Orleans to aid in this work. The events of the war had scattered the congregation, and had worked alienations among those that remained. There was no regular congregational list of names available, from which I might find out who were to be relied on for assistance in the work of reconstructing the society. During my twelve weeks' stay in New Orleans, I used a considerable portion of my time in calling upon such persons as I had reason to suppose were interested; and the names of these, between sixty and seventy in number, I placed on a list, with their addresses, as a help to any minister who may go there. The church edifice is large, well situated, and commodious. During my stay, the number of worshippers on Sunday mornings varied from one hundred to three hundred, — the tendency being to increase, — a considerable proportion of whom were strangers, or persons not hitherto known to those who were regular attendants. On Easter-Sunday morning we held a communion service, the first held there for five years, in which about forty persons joined.

In New Orleans, an able and faithful minister would find a large field for usefulness. Our brethren there, having applied to your Association to select a suitable laborer for their portion of the vineyard, look with hope to your interest in their condition. Their city is a large and growing, and must continue to be a large and growing, centre of population. Society there, as elsewhere throughout the South, is in an unsettled state. The gospel certainly carries a healing element for every unsettled and disordered condition of society. The principles of the gospel are always the same; but the administration thereof will be diverse in its modes, as the diversity of human circumstances demands. Now the question arises, Can our Liberal Christianity, in its Unitarian expression, be presented or administered in any and every condition of society; or must it be confined to particular communities, where previous training and

habits of thought have prepared the way for it? Is it consistent with our highest sense of duty, that large and central communities are to be ignored or unaided, because their prevailing habits of thought, and tone of society, are different from those of the North and East? A conventional physician administers his conventional dose; but a scientific physician studies cases, and deals with them accordingly. And thus, likewise, I submit, will a truly good, unselfish, and apostolic minister deal with people, and bodies of people. If the pulpit of New Orleans is to be fitly filled, it must be by a large-minded and large-hearted man, who will think less of himself than of his work, and who will not be impatient in waiting for results. He will be faithful in his presentation of the grand principles of the gospel, and be content to allow the people to make their own application of them to controverted questions of public affairs. He will meet with some persons there who have suffered, and are in sorrow; and he must have sympathy enough to share with them, although their views on past affairs may not be coincident with his own. There have been political alienations, but these are waning; and decisive signs have been given that a better spirit is taking their place. The presence and ministrations of a faithful pastor would help the growth of this spirit to a wider development. By such reconstruction of a church through patient Christian methods, something would be done towards a true reconstruction of the nation. The light of a fair, Christian example is never without its benefits to society; and it seems to me, that at this juncture the presence of a wise, Christian man would be specially felt, and exercise an extensive and beneficent influence.

Ever yours, J. CORDNER.

REPORT OF REV. WILLIAM F. BRIDGE.

PETERBOROUGH, May 7, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR, — I have a parish here, represented by a Sunday audience of about eighty persons; and feel that the great need here — as I think you can gather from Mr. Smith's letter

to you, a copy of which he sent me — is of the inculcation of an earnestly religious spirit. I have met with no person who attends our church who needs to be freed from any trammels of a stern and morose theology.

Accordingly, the main burden of my speech here has been practical; no farther theological than was necessary to inculcate the central doctrine of God's deep, constant, fatherly interest in his children, and his near and constant presence with them. The people have outgrown the Calvinistic theology: they are held fast — without knowing it, for the most part — in the thickets of Calvinistic metaphysics. God is afar off to them, acting by general laws, — if *He* act at all. And the Christ in whom they believed having been proved to *them* a myth, the Mediator which *that* theology needs is taken away; and they are ἄθεοι ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

A sense of duty, and the privilege of religious obligation, and the reality of God's interest in us, I have labored to inculcate.

I remain, very truly yours, WM. H. BRIDGE.

EXTRACT FROM REPORT OF REV. WILLIAM R. COLE.

DEC. 31. — I could not well go far from home; accepted the invitation of some Baptist friends, and so preached in the Jefferson Baptist Church, ten miles north of this, a practical sermon, which so pleased them that the leading members urged me to give them a course of sermons, setting forth the doctrines of Unitarianism. And so we occasionally meet liberality and genuine Christian treatment within the pale of Orthodoxy. My experience in these country places has solved, to my own satisfaction, a question discussed sometimes in the Divinity School, "Is Liberal Christianity adapted to the masses?" I never met with a more hearty welcome, or have more attentive audiences, than in these smaller places where our faith is *new*. Iowa, like every other Western State, is white to the harvest.

Where are the laborers? Where are the strong, earnest men to come and take these young societies as they are formed, and build them up in our inspiring faith, and make them fit temples for the worship of the living God?

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS OF REV. A. A. ROBERTS.

BARABOO, WIS., May 9, 1866.

DEAR BROTHER LOWE, — Our interest here continues promising; and there are five or six other places within fifteen or twenty miles, where, if I were five or six more than I am, I think I could build Liberal churches.

We have had a great freshet here, which has swept away our bridges and dams, and delayed our work. Some of the members of our society have lost pretty heavily by it. Yet our building is going on in spite of delay and discouragement.

. . . There are many things in the able article of Mr. Mayo on Western Missionary Work with which I cannot agree.

I can conceive no process of arithmetical calculation by which a score of towns west of Pennsylvania can be found where disastrous experiments have been tried. There are not, in fact, one-fourth that number, where any considerable amount of money and effort have been expended under the direction of the American Unitarian Association, where there is not a good prospect for our cause, if not a good society already established.

. . . I clearly recognize the importance of securing our liberal interests in the commercial, manufacturing, and educational centres; but have a word to say of the first class of places mentioned; and that is, that, with two or three exceptions, they are abundantly able to take care of themselves, and pay for colleagues for their pastors, too, without the American Unitarian Association settling ten thousand a year on them; and especially as they are such able men, they are, of course, able to make their people see its importance and do it.

. . . These large places, rejoicing in their powerful leaders,

certainly ought to take care of themselves, and leave the Association able to do more for the second, third, and, may I not say, some fourth, or fifth-rate places.

. . . Another word, and I will weary your patience no more. I do not clearly know what is meant by "keeping in vital Christian communion with all the component parts" of "the great army of the living God, — including the Catholic and Orthodox organizations;" but it is very plain to me, that, while our communion is open to them, they are closely shut and bolted and barred against us. In points of doctrine, regarded vital to them, they stand at our antipodes; and, when we see any who have broken from their ranks forcing a march forward, and rising above our horizon, we can only shout them encouragement, and cheer them on, and bid them welcome, from our own firm ground of faith. We cannot leave it, to go backward to meet them half way. Yours fraternally,

A. A. Roberts.

LETTERS FROM REV. JOHN ELLIS.

Knightstown, Ind., April 22, 1866.

Brother Lowe, — I am yet in the field, and very active; yet operating in a somewhat different way from what I did during the long evenings of winter. I preach every sabbath about three sermons, in two, and sometimes three, different places; and visit during the week, distribute those pamphlets, talk and pray with families. Most families receive me cordially; yet some think that "Unitarian" is only another name given to "Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

Those tracts sent me, I think, will do a "heap" of good; for men will read a book or papers, who would not hear a sermon with any patience at all.

Last sabbath, I organized a union sabbath school of about one hundred members, mostly young people and children. I put it entirely into the hands of young men and young ladies, appointing one young man to the office of superintendent, and another as assistant; also electing a lady assistant from

among the youth. I distributed some of those sabbath-school papers you sent me among them.

Ogden, Ind., May 1, 1866.

Dear Brother Lowe, — I have suspended operations for the present at Thorntown, owing to a lack of a place of worship. I first engaged a church, owned by the Disciples (Campbellites), and was getting along finely, until they took the alarm, fearing we should succeed in building up a church on a free basis; and so turned me out of their chapel. I then obtained a good lecture-room in the Academy, owned by the Methodists, and went on very pleasantly for a number of weeks; but, when the presiding elder came around, we were "ousted" from that.

This left us again without a place of worship. But the New-school Presbyterians have a good church nearly finished, and offer us that a part of the time, so soon as completed.

So we have held up for the present; but I am not idle. I have aided in organizing three sabbath schools since I wrote last, which bid fair to be a success. I continue my evening meetings yet, although the evenings are getting short. I shall discontinue night meeting soon.

Your brother, J. Ellis.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

[All books received will be promptly acknowledged, and notices will be given of such as are appropriately reviewed in a religious journal.]

Hospital Life in the Army of the Potomac. By William Howell Reed. Boston: William V. Spencer.

We can never grow weary with reading the accounts of the marvellous experiences of the four years so lately past, in connection with the Sanitary Commission. And we know of no book which on the whole is superior to this for its simple and evidently truthful, but exceedingly vivid, picturing of hospital scenes. Those who remember letters from the same author, and describing similar events, published in the "Christian Register," will need no further recommendation for this deeply interesting narrative.

The Christian's Daily Treasury; a Religious Exercise for Every Day in the Year. By EBENEZER TEMPLE, author of "The Domestic Altar," &c. Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

A volume of so-called "meditations," but really skeletons of sermons, each capable, no doubt, of being made interesting and effective; but we fear it is expecting too much in the way of intellectual activity to suppose that they will become such under the meditation of common readers.

A Thousand a Year. By Mrs. E. M. BRUCE. Boston: Lee & Shepard.

We should like this book better, if the prominent character in it had shown less of that want of moral independence, which is so often charged as the prevailing fault of ministers. It contains, however, so touching a portrayal of that in the conduct of parishes which leads to such defect in the minister, that we hope it may be read, and that its lessons may be pondered.

The Scriptural Law of Divorce. By ALVAH HOVEY, D.D. Boston: Gould & Lincoln.

This little book was prepared at the request of an ecclesiastical council of the Baptist Church, to answer the question, "Do the Scriptures permit us to regard divorce, for any cause save one, as effecting an entire dissolution of marriage; so that either of the parties may be united in wedlock to a second person?" The question is decided in the negative; and the reasons are given, based on an examination of the teachings of the Bible.

PAMPHLETS.

Hints for the Prevention and Management of the Cholera. By AUGUSTUS MASON, M.D. Fourteenth edition. Boston: Walker, Fuller, & Co.

Memoir of the Rev. Convers Francis, D.D. By Rev. WILLIAM NEWELL, D.D.

This is a brief, but truly appreciative and discriminating, sketch of one whose wide scholarship and genial nature, and devotedness to his profession, made him deservedly one of the most honored among our ministers.

Some Reason for the Immediate Establishment of a National System of Education for the United States. By CHARLES BROOKS. New York: Loyal Publication Society.

PUBLICATIONS OF THE AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.

We would call renewed attention to the list of our publications, which will usually be found, with prices affixed, on the cover of the Journal.

We earnestly refer to this matter of the circulation of our books, as the most interesting and effectual method of strengthening our own body, and of helping the cause of Liberal Christianity. It is a work in which every individual can easily share; and we hope that none will fail to procure some portion at least of the valuable religious literature which we offer, both for personal or family use and for the purpose of lending or giving to those who may care to learn our views.

The forthcoming volume, by Dr. J. F. Clarke, alread announced, will be issued in a few days.

MEETINGS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

May 14, 1866. — Present, Messrs. Palfrey, Kidder, Padelford, Hedge, Clarke, Hinckley, Livermore, Hepworth, Smith, Sawyer, Shattuck, Denny, Crosby, Fox, and Lowe.

The Finance Committee reported, that an application had been received from the Church of the Redeemer, in Boston, for a loan of six hundred dollars, and recommended that it be granted; which report was adopted.

The Committee on Publications reported, that some of the Association's publications had been given, in response to applications received, to Baker Theological Institute, Charleston, S.C.; Wilmington Institute, Wilmington, Del.; and the Public Library of the Christian Commission, San Francisco, California.

They also reported, that a communication had been received from a Committee of the First Parish, in Portland, Me., presenting to the Association the stereotype plates of the two volumes, by the late Rev. Dr. Nichols, entitled, "Hours with the Evangelists;" and recommended that the thanks of the Board be voted to them for this valuable gift.

They further reported in favor of purchasing, to aid in its publication, copies, to the value of one hundred and fifty dollars, of Rev. Dr. Furness's translation of Schenkel's "Characterbild Jesu," whenever the work should be issued.

Both of the recommendations of this Committee were adopted.

The Committee on the New England States reported, that they had long felt the need of some discreet and able minister, who could, at any time, be called upon to go on ministerial service in behalf of the Association. Sometimes a new Society was started, and it was of great importance that a person of experience and ability should be sent to develop the interest needed to insure success. Sometimes circumstances of difficulty and discouragement would arise in established societies, which made it eminently desirable, that the right man should go to speak for a Sunday or more, in the pulpit, and spend the intervening week in pastoral service. They believed that Rev. William P. Tilden, who was about to be released from his present duties, was peculiarly adapted to this important work; and they therefore proposed, that he should be invited to enter upon it, as the missionary of the Association, as soon as convenient after the expiration of his present engagement. They further proposed, that he should receive a salary of two thousand dollars, besides the payment of all necessary travelling expenses; and that whatever sums he might receive from the places to which he was sent should be paid by him to the Association.

This Committee further reported in favor of an appropriation of three hundred dollars in aid of the mission in Boston, now holding services at Horticultural Hall, under the pastoral care of Rev. N. M. Gaylord.

They reported that applications for aid had been received from the society in Sudbury, Mass., and Brooklyn, Conn., and recommended that the sum of one hundred dollars be granted to each.

They also reported, that an earnest request had been received from the societies in Providence, that the application for aid from the Christian Society in South Portsmouth, R.I., presented at the last meeting, should be granted; and the Committee recommended, that, in view of this fact, the sum of five hundred dollars be appropriated to that society.

All the recommendations contained in the report of this Committee were adopted.

The Committee on the Middle and Southern States submitted reports from Rev. Edward E. Hale, who had visited, in behalf of the Association, Washington, Richmond, Va., and Vineland, N.J.; from Rev. Dr. Bellows, in reference to Washington; Rev. William F. Bridge, of Peterborough, N.Y.; Rev. Henry F. Edes, in Georgia; Rev. James Thurston, in North Carolina; Rev. John Murray, giving an account of his visit to Vineland, N.J.; Rev. Dr. Farley, concerning the movement in Wilmington, Del.; and Rev. Samuel J. May, in reference to Ithaca and Ilion, N.Y.

The Committee on the Western States reported, that the difficulty which had existed for several months in the society at Janesville, Wis., had been very happily adjusted; and submitted the following resolutions, adopted by the society, which had been recently received by the Secretary: —

Whereas, The peculiar circumstances under which the society was originally organized, and the interest which the Unitarian Association of Boston has manifested in its success, make it incumbent upon the members of this parish to express a more formal recognition of the benefits received, therefore —

Resolved, That the labors of the Rev. Silas Farrington during the two years that he has been engaged among us — in which a large and earnest society has been gathered together, and a beautiful and commodious church erected — have been successful beyond the expectation of our most sanguine friends.

Resolved, That in our present pastor we recognize an able, talented, and most acceptable preacher, — a faithful Christian teacher, to whose earnest, self-sacrificing devotion our success has been so largely due; and that we hope the day is far distant when the harmonious and pleasant relations that now exist between pastor and people may be severed for any reason whatever.

Resolved, That we not only tender the warmest expression of our

gratitude to the Unitarian Association for rendering us such substantial aid in the support of our minister, and towards the erection of our church; but we wish to assure the members of that organization of our earnest desire to be recognized by them as an auxiliary society, known by the same name, and holding the same religious faith with themselves, and willing to labor for its success and up-building throughout the land.

Resolved, That the Trustees of this society be requested to affix their respective names to these resolutions, and transmit a copy thereof to the Secretary of the Unitarian Association, with the request that he lay the same before that organization.

J. M. Burgess,
Orrin Guernsey,
J. M. Putnam,
Charles E. Church,
George Wells,

Trustees of the First Independent Society of Liberal Christians of Janesville, Wis.

This Committee also reported, that a request had been received from the officers of the Meadville Theological School, that Rev. Charles H. Brigham should give a course of lectures to the students in that Institution, occupying about six weeks of the year; and they recommended that the request be granted, provided the arrangement should be satisfactory to Mr. Brigham; and also provided, that the Trustees of the Meadville School should supply his place, during his absence from Ann Arbor, in a manner satisfactory to this Board.

They further recommended, that the sum of three hundred dollars be appropriated to the society in Delton, Wis., towards the salary of Rev. Hiram Norton, with the understanding that one-half of the amount should be in consideration of missionary services to be rendered by him in other places in Wisconsin; also that the Western-States Committee be authorized to invite the resident settled ministers in the West, to go out, for occasional missionary work, in places near their homes; and that the sum of five hundred dollars be appropriated for this purpose.

The recommendations of this Committee were adopted.

The Pacific Coast Committee reported, that letters had been received from Rev. Charles G. Ames, stating that he had commenced missionary work in the interior of California, but had been obliged to abandon it for a time, in order to take Mr.

Stebbins's place in San Francisco, who had gone to Oregon to preach, and to attempt the formation of a society at Portland, in that State. Mr. Ames also stated, that he had decided to remain in California, after the close of his present engagement with the Association.

The Committee on Foreign Missions reported, that a very interesting communication had been received from William T. Brigham, Esq., whom the Secretary had invited to make a thorough investigation of our missionary operations in Calcutta, during his visit there. While they did not consider it expedient, so near the close of the term of service of the present Board, to make any new recommendations in regard to the India Mission, they would state that their examination into the subject had assured them of the very great value and importance of this mission; and they hoped that it might receive increased support.

The Special Committee on the Annual Meeting presented a report concerning the arrangements made by them, which was accepted; and all further matters connected with the meeting were referred to the same Committee, with full power.

The Board then adjourned to Friday, May 25, at three o'clock, to hear the Annual Report, which the Secretary had been requested to prepare.

INTELLIGENCE.

Rev. ROBERT L. COLLIER, D.D., was installed as pastor of the First Unitarian Society in Chicago, Ill., on Tuesday, April 17. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer by Rev. Carlton A. Staples, of Milwaukee, Wis.; reading from the Scriptures by Rev. Silas Farrington, of Janesville, Wis.; prayer of installation by Rev. George W. Hosmer, D.D., of Buffalo, N.Y.; sermon by Rev. A. D. Mayo, of Cincinnati, Ohio; charge by Rev. John H. Heywood, of Louisville, Ky.; right hand of fellowship by Rev. Robert Collyer, of Chicago, Ill.; address to the people by Rev. Charles H. Brigham, of Ann Arbor, Mich.; closing prayer by Rev. Thomas L. Eliot, of St. Louis, Mo.; benediction by the pastor.

Rev. WILLIAM G. NOWELL was installed as pastor of the society in Ware, Mass., on Wednesday, May 9. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer, and reading from the Scriptures, by Rev. Charles A. Humphreys, of Springfield; sermon by Rev. Henry W. Foote, of Boston; prayer of installation, and charge, by Rev. Rush R. Shippen, of Worcester; right hand of fellowship by Rev. Edward I. Galvin, of Brookfield; address to the people by Rev. John W. Hudson, of Chicopee; concluding prayer by Rev. John H. Moore; benediction by the pastor.

Rev. GEORGE M. RICE was installed as pastor of the society in Dublin, N.H., on Wednesday, May 16. The order of services was as follows: Introductory prayer by Rev. Nathaniel Seaver, jun., of Walpole, N.H.; reading from the Scriptures by Rev. Charles B. Ferry, of Peterborough, N.H.; sermon by Rev. Cyrus A. Bartol, D.D., of Boston; installing prayer by Rev. Ephraim Abbott, of Westford, Mass.; charge by Rev. Charles Babbidge, of Pepperell, Mass.; right hand of fellowship by Rev. Crawford Nightingale, of Groton, Mass.; address to the people by Rev. William O. White, of Keene, N.H.; concluding prayer by Rev. William B. Buxton, of Wilton, N.H.; benediction by the pastor.

Rev. JOHN SAVARY has accepted a call from the society in South Hingham, Mass.

Rev. WILLIAM T. PHELAN, of Mendon, Mass., has accepted a call from the society in Ashby.

Rev. AUGUSTUS M. HASKELL has resigned the charge of the Barton-square Society, Salem, Mass.

Rev. HIRAM NORTON has accepted an invitation to take charge of a new Unitarian Society in Delton, Wis.

Rev. MARSHALL T. KIMBALL has accepted an invitation to take charge of the society in Madison, Wis.

Rev. GEORGE W. SKINNER, formerly pastor of the Universalist Society in New Bedford, Mass., has accepted a call from the new Unitarian Society in Stoneham, Mass.

Rev. FREDERIC M. HOLLAND has resigned the charge of the society in Marietta, Ohio.

THE MEADVILLE THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL will hold its annual Visitation on Thursday, June 19; and the fall term of the institution will begin, one week earlier than usual, on Monday, Sept. 3.

THE WESTERN CONFERENCE OF UNITARIAN CHURCHES will meet in Buffalo, N.Y.; the exercises beginning on Wednesday evening, June 20, and continuing through the following Sunday.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

1866.

March 30.	From	Society in Littleton, including life-membership for Mrs. William H. White, and thirty dollars from Mrs. Reuben Hoar, to make her husband a life-member	$69.00
April 21.	„	Society in Medfield	45.00
23.	„	Rev. Dr. Briggs's Society, Salem	600.00
23.	„	Society in Burlington, Vt.	200.00
24.	„	Society in Brookline	750.05
24.	„	Rev. William T. Crapster, as an annual membership	1.00
25.	„	Rev. Dr. Hill's Society, Worcester	524.00
25.	„	Society in Fairhaven	105.30
26.	„	Society in Waltham	250.00
26.	„	Society in Hubbardston	50.00
27.	„	Society in Beverly	350.00
27.	„	ladies of Society in Belmont, including a life-membership for Mrs. Mary D. Brown	100.00
27.	„	Society in Bernardston	54.00
27.	„	Mrs. Mary Evans, Elkton, Md.	10.00
28.	„	Society in Belfast, Me.	100.00
28.	„	Society in Germantown, Pa.	46.50
28.	„	Society in Uxbridge	79.28
28.	„	Edwin Wilson, as first payment towards life-membership	15.00
28.	„	Thomas Whitridge, Baltimore, Md., for India Mission	500.00
30.	„	Rev. Edward E. Hale's Society, Boston	1,950.11
30.	„	Society in Canton	175.00
30.	„	a gentleman in Richmond, Va., through Rev. C. Y. De Normandie	10.00
30.	„	Society in Waltham, additional	1.00
30.	„	James B. Moore, as an annual membership	1.00
May 1.	„	Society in East Marshfield	34.00
1.	„	Society in Petersham	26.13
1.	„	Theodore H. Bell, as an annual membership	1.00
2.	„	Hollis-street Society, Boston	1,272.56
2.	„	Rev. Dr. Briggs's Society, Salem, additional (in all $650)	50.00
2.	„	Society in Harvard, including life-membership for Rev. Henry H. Barber	60.00

May	2.	„	Society at Jamaica Plain	$600.00
	3.	„	Rev. Dr. Putnam's Society, Roxbury	1,500 00
	3.	„	Society in Mendon	26.00
	4.	„	Society in Scituate	16.20
	5.	„	Rev. R. R. Shippen's Society, Worcester	261.00
	5.	„	Ladies' Association, connected with the Society in South Danvers	21.00
	7.	„	Rev. Edward E. Hale's Society, Boston, additional	1,050.00
	7.	„	Charles Mixter, Newport, R.I.	50.00
	7.	„	Edmund Tweedy, Newport, R.I.	30.00
	7.	„	Society in Weston	80.03
	8.	„	Mount Pleasant Society, Roxbury, including life-memberships for Rev. C. J. Bowen, John Kneeland, and Theodore H. Bell	335.16
	8.	„	Society in Keene, N.H.	400.00
	8.	„	Barton-square Society, Salem	300.00
	8.	„	Society in Billerica	87.00
	8.	„	S. F. Whitney, as an annual membership	1.00
	9.	„	John B. Hill, New Brunswick, N.J., as a donation, $28.00	
			For monthly journals 7.00	35.00
	10.	„	Society in East Bridgewater, as a donation $38.00	
			For monthly journals 22.00	60.00
	10.	„	Ladies' Sewing Society, Lynn, to make Rev. S. B. Stewart a life-member	30.00
	10.	„	Society in Templeton	55.00
	10.	„	From Rev. E. B. Willson's Society, Salem, additional	10.00
	11.	„	Society in West Cambridge	150.00
	11.	„	Society in Brookline, additional (in all $888.05)	138.00
	11.	„	Society in Brooklyn, Ct.	11.00
	12.	„	Society in Germantown, Pa. (in all $171.50)	125.00
	12.	„	Society in Andover	105.00
	14.	„	Society in Meadville, Pa.	50.00
	14.	„	Rev. William R. Alger's Society, Boston	552 00
	15.	„	Society in Medfield, additional (in all $55)	10.00
	15.	„	John Prentiss, Keene, N.H.	100.00
	16.	„	Society in Ashby, including life-membership for Deacon Howard Gates	65.00
	16.	„	Societies in Providence, R.I. (on account)	1,200.00
	16.	„	ladies of Society in Medford, to make Rev. Edward C. Towne a life-member	30.00
	16.	„	Society in Quincy	250.00
	17.	„	Society in South Danvers, including a life-membership for D. W. King	300.00
	17.	„	W. Melcher, Gilford, N.H.	25.00
	17.	„	First Society (Rev. Rufus Ellis's), Boston, including life-memberships for William Everett, and Rev. F. E. Abbot	640.25
	17.	„	New South Society (Rev. William P. Tilden's), Boston	430.00
	17.	„	Rev. T. J. Mumford's Society, Dorchester, including $30 from Joseph Carew, to make William J. Rolfe a life-member	166.16
	19.	„	Society in West Bridgewater	70 00
	19.	„	Society in Hudson	32.50